

(9)
A
DISCOURSE

ON

Christian Zeal;

OR, THE

DUTY

OF

Contending for the FAITH :

FROM

JUDE, Verse 3.

Preach'd at IPSWICH,

AUGUST 23, 1739.

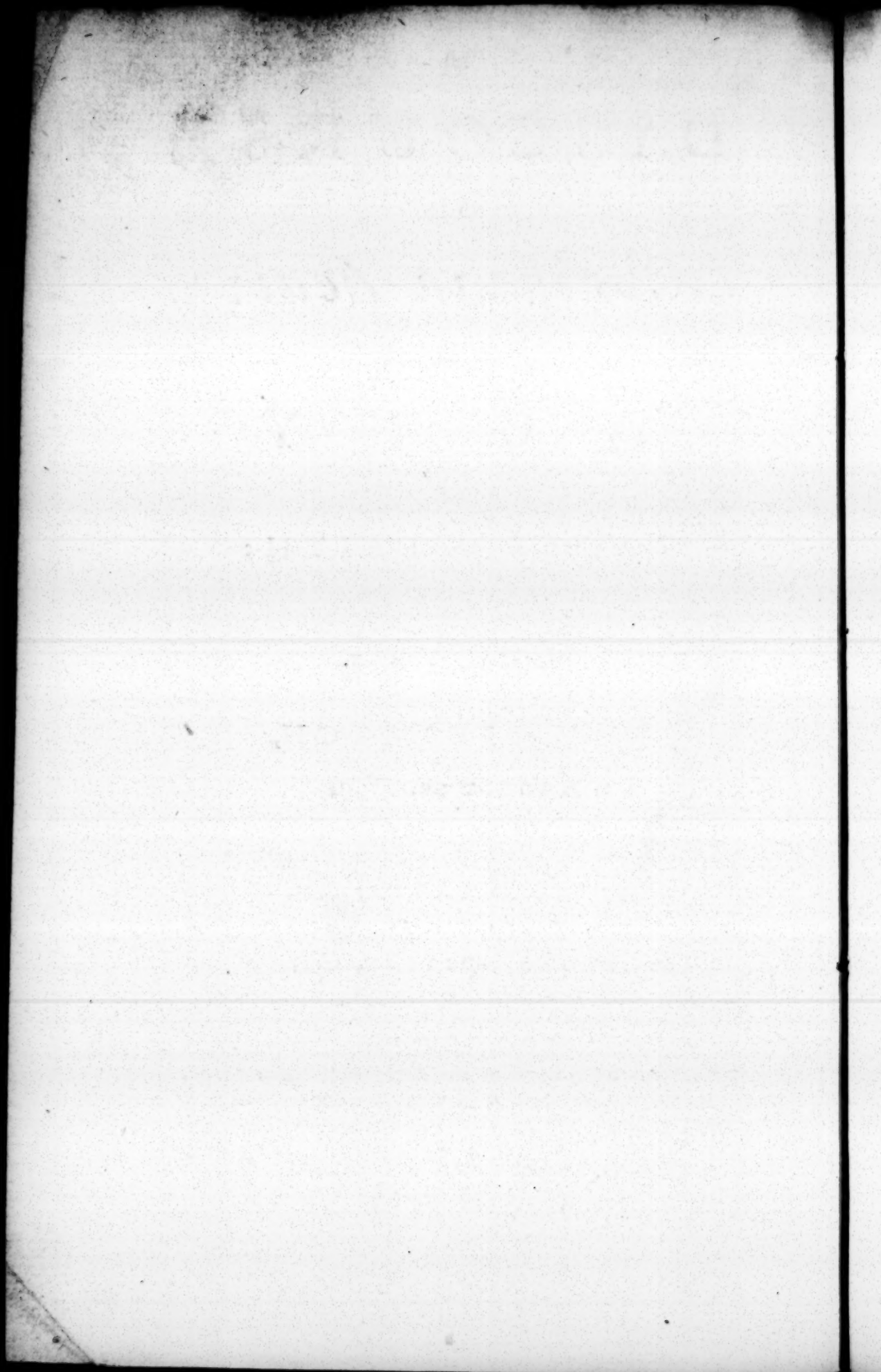
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A
DISCOURSE
ON
Christian Zeal, &c.



JUDE, Verse 3.

— *that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith
which was once delivered to the Saints.*

THIS Exhortation is of great Importance and hath a peculiar Demand upon our Attention : for it is propos'd as the Scope of a whole inspired Epistle and the Effect of an Apostle's deep Concern for the common Cause of Christianity. *Beloved, when I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.* And indeed what Duty can we conceive more general, and momentous, than the Preservation of so precious a Depositum as the Christian Religion in its original Intireness and Simplicity ? It

ought to be the common Solicitude, as it is the common Interest, of all, who have received this most excellent and perfect Revelation, to oppose to the uttermost by every wise and justifiable Method, every Corruption and Depravation of it either in Doctrine or Practice. What those Methods are, I shall have occasion to shew in discoursing upon this Passage of St. Jude. The Order of my Reflections upon it will be as follows :

- I. I shall open the Case, or State of Things, which gave Occasion to this Exhortation.
- II. I shall explain what we are to understand by *the Faith once delivered to the Saints* ;
- III. What kind of Contention for the Faith is here required.

I. I shall open the Case, or State of Things, which gave Occasion to the Exhortation in my Text ; and which render'd an earnest Contention for the Faith, a seasonable and necessary Duty.

Now the Case, which gave occasion to this Exhortation, was a most horrible Corruption of the Gospel, and Defection or Apostasy from the Purity and Holiness of it ; begun and propagated by a Set of lewd and abandon'd Men, who perverted and abused the Doctrines of Grace to patronize the most licentious Tenets and impure Practices : These Men not only professed Christianity, but made Pretences to higher Knowledge in it, and superior Qualifications

tions for Teaching it, endeavouring thereby more effectually to corrupt and seduce others to their wicked and pernicious Principles; Principles which were greatly dishonouring to the Christian Religion and subversive of it, and which amounted not only to a Denial and Rejection of Revelation, but also of the Providence of God and all Natural Religion. Our Apostle enters upon the Representation of this dreadful and threatening State of Things in the Christian Church at the Verse next following my Text; *For there are certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this Condemnation, ungodly Men, turning the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* The rest of the Description, and further Account of the Characters of these unclean and profligate Men, lie dispers'd throughout the Epistle, and are to be found in *ver. 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19.* These were probably the same kind of Hereticks, who go under the Denomination of *Nicolaitans*, in *Rev. ii. 15.* For as these are charg'd by St. Jude (*ver. 11.*) with running greedily after the Error of *Balaam* for Reward, so Jesus Christ, in his Reproof of the Church of *Pergamos*, says; *But I have a few Things against Thee, because Thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a Stumbling-block before the Children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to Idols and to commit Fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the*
Doctrine

Doctrines of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate: i. e. them who follow the *Nicolaitans* wherein *they* follow *Balaam*; them also, who follow that Sect in their *peculiar* Errors. From this Passage, compared with St. Jude, we may fairly collect, that the Apostasy from the Purity of the Christian Faith, which he describes, consisted, among other things, in giving in to very dangerous Compliances with the Gentile Idolatry (probably to avoid Persecution) even to the practising and defending the impure Rites used in their Idolatrous Worship. The Men, therefore, who, taught such Doctrines as these for Doctrines of Christianity, were chargeable *indeed* with *Heresy*, according to St. Paul's use of that Word who ranks *Heresy* among Works of the Flesh; *Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, &c. Idolatry, &c. Strife, Seditions, HERESIES* *. The springing up of such baneful *Heresy* in Christ's Kingdom, the Growth of Principles so vile and immoral, and of such flagitious Debaucheries, vindicated under the Protection of his sacred Name, demanded the most serious Attention and zealous Opposition, of all who had any concern for the Glory of God, the Honour of their Saviour, and the Interest of true Religion in the World.

This was a Case, in which the very Foundations of the Gospel were in danger of being overturned, in which the very Design and End

* Gal. v. 19, 20.

of it was oppos'd and openly struck at : it was represented, it was industriously inculcated by these traitorous Professors of Christianity, that the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, instead of *teaching us to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, &c.* did patronize the most brutish Sensuality and Uncleaness. Here then indeed was a Necessity for an *earnest Contention* and Conflict, to vindicate the Christian Faith from these gross Corruptions and Misrepresentations. In these Circumstances of Things, it was highly fit, it was absolutely necessary for an Apostle to sound the Alarm, and awaken the Zeal and Diligence of all sincere Christians, to exert a more than ordinary Care for maintaining pure and primitive Christianity, and doing what in them lay to stop the Progress of so dreadful a Corruption of it. *It was needful for me, says our Apostle, to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.* This brings me to the Second Topic of this Discourse :

II. To explain what we are to understand by *the Faith once delivered to the Saints.*

By *the Faith* is meant the Christian Religion, the entire Gospel Revelation comprehending all the Doctrines and Precepts which the Apostles taught in the Name of Christ : for as the Precepts, as well as the Doctrines of Christianity, were corrupted and perverted by these lewd Professors, the Defence and Preservation of *both* must unquestionably be design'd by that Contention

tion for the Faith which is here required. The *Faith* is evidently us'd for the Christian Religion, in the following Passages ; * *A great Company of the Priests were obedient to the FAITH.* † *Do good to all Men, especially unto them who are of the Household of FAITH.* || *The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter Times some shall depart from the FAITH.* § *But before FAITH came we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the FAITH which should afterward be revealed.* — *but after that FAITH is come, we are no longer under a Schoolmaster :* This *Faith*, or entire System of Christian Religion, was delivered by the Apostles to the Saints : It was by them deposited in the Churches as a most invaluable Trust ; whereby the Christian Church became now, what the Jewish had been before, the Keepers of the Oracles of God : In discharge of this Trust, as Guardians of the Divine Revelations, they were bound to prevent, what in them lay, the Loss, Adulteration and Corruption of them. The present Circumstances of Things, when St. Jude wrote this Epistle, call'd for a more than ordinary Zeal and Vigilance for the Support of pure and primitive Christianity, inasmuch as there were many who had *turned from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them* *.

It was once delivered, as my Text expresses it ; intimating, that, as it was a Commandment and

* Acts vi. 7.

† Gal. vi. 10.

|| 1 Tim. iv. 1.

§ Gal. iii. 23, 25.

* 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Doctrine never to be changed, or set aside, by any after-Revelation, so also that, if, through Negligence or Wickedness, they lost or deprav'd it, they were not to expect a Renewal and Repetition of so glorious a Privilege. God had rais'd up and inspir'd a sufficient Number of Persons, whom he had commission'd and furnish'd with proper Credentials, to communicate this final and perfect Discovery of his Will to the World : But there was not to be a Succession of such extraordinary Persons, as there had been in the Jewish Church, to effect the Preservation and Propagation of it to future Ages ; nor yet a new Commission to be issued out for the Delivery of it a second Time to such Churches, who, through their Ingratitude and Neglect, should change and deprave the Purity and Integrity of it. However, that nothing might be wanting on the Part of Divine Providence towards the uncorrupted Conveyance of his Truth to latest Times, he was pleas'd to direct the penning of the New Testament Scriptures by faithful Men, his own Spirit presiding over the Execution of that important Work. In these Books then is to be found that original uncorrupted Faith, that pure and primitive Christianity, the Profession and Practice whereof, with Integrity and Perseverance, in the midst of the greatest Dangers and Discouragements, is the indispensable Duty of Christians in all Ages ; and is peculiarly so in those Times and on those Occasions, when the Doctrines and Precepts of

it are perverted and abus'd, to serve the Designs, or gratify the Lusts, of worldly and ungodly Men. On such Occasions, Neutrality is abetting the Corruption, and Lukewarmness a most criminal Indifference to the Cause and Honour of Christ: Nothing less than an *earnest Contention for the Faith* can excuse us from the Charge of basely forsaking or betraying the Interests of Christianity. It concerns us then, not a little, to have just and distinct Apprehensions wherein this *earnest Contention* consists, least, mistaking the Nature of it, we run into some wrong and unjustifiable Spirit and Conduct in striving for the Faith of the Gospel. Let us then proceed to the Third Thing propos'd in the Method of Discourse:

III. To Enquire what kind of *Contention for the Faith*, (i. e. the Gospel) is here required.

The *Greek* Word, us'd by the Apostle, and which our Translation has expressed by two Words, *earnestly contend*, is a Metaphor, borrow'd from those famous publick Exercises, or Contests, among the *Greeks*, call'd the *Olympic Games*, wherein Men were wont to *contend* one with the other, in Running, Wrestling, &c. certain Rewards and Honours being the Prize, which was bestowed on those, who were, by appointed Judges, declared Conquerors. To these Contests the Apostle *Paul* compares the Christian Life, which is a glorious Contention for an immortal Prize; *Know ye not that they which run in a Race, run all, but one receiveth the*

the Prize ? So run that ye may obtain. And every Man that * STRIVETH, (the Original hath the same Word, which is used in my Text) *for the Mastery, is temperate in all Things : Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible.* The same Apostle expresses *contending for the Gospel* by a Metaphor of the like kind with this of St. Jude ; † *That ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind,* STRIVING together (St. Paul's Word signifies jointly wrestling) *for the Faith of the Gospel.* Our blessed Lord himself hath chosen the Metaphor and Word us'd in my Text, to describe the Struggle and Dispute which a Sinner has with corrupt Affections and worldly Temptations, at his Entrance upon a good Life ; ‖ STRIVE (contend) *to enter in at the strait Gate :* and once more, St. Paul represents by this Word his own indefatigable Pains in the Ministry, and *earnest Contention* for the Salvation of Mens Souls ; § *whom we preach, warning every Man and teaching every Man in all Wisdom ; that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus : whereunto I also labour,* STRIVING (contending) *according to his working, &c.* These Passages clearly shew the true Import of St. Jude's Expression ; and that *the Contention for the Faith*, which he intended, is, for Nature and Kind, the same which is required to our leading a Christian Life and obtaining the Christian Salva-

* 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. † Phil. i. 27. ‖ Luk. xiii. 24.

§ Colof. i. 28, 29.

tion. It cannot, must not, therefore, be an angry Contention, unless it be a Man's Duty to be in a Ferment in the Practice of Religion, and full of Wrath and Bitterness against whatsoever and whosoever stands in the way of his Virtue and Happiness; and that Trials, Temptations, and Opposition in the Course of a good Life are to be encounter'd with Heat and Fury, and to be beat down with hard Words and reviling Speeches. The same Temper, the same Zeal with which a Christian is to pursue after the Holiness and Happiness of the Gospel, is he to exercise, in opposing those who corrupt and disobey it; for the same Word is used to express his Duty in both Cases. But further, the *Contention for the Faith* here required is such, as consisted with, and had a Tendency to the Conviction and Recovery of those who were departed from it: *Others* (says the Apostle, ver. 23.) *save with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire*. By these Endeavours for their Reformation, they were to shew their Tenderness to the Persons of the Offenders, and at the same Time an Abhorrence of their unclean Principles and Practices; for it is added, *bating even the Garment spotted by the Flesh*. Unless then Men are to be convinced by Blows and ill Usage, unless branding them with odious Names, and abusing them with bad Language, be most likely to win their Attention, and dispose them to hearken to Instruction; these cannot be the Methods of defending the Gospel which St. Jude recom-

recommends, nor this *the earnest Contention for the Faith* which he designed. *To contend earnestly for the Faith* in St. Jude's Sense (which I would now more determinately explain) is, in the first Place, oppos'd to Unconcernedness and Indifference about it. Such a Temper is absolutely an Unfaithfulness to the Trust, which God has reposed in us, in committing the Christian Faith into our hands. To be entirely unconcerned, or very indifferent, whether Truth or Error, Righteousness or Wickedness prevail in the World, is a Shameful Desertion of the Divine Cause: and when a Party of bad Men is openly form'd, and such Opinions are broach'd, and Practices defended, as are manifestly repugnant to Divine Truth and subversive of Christianity; to be neutral in such a Case, and look on as a meer Spectator, can admit no other Construction than what our Saviour has put upon it, * *He that is not with me is against me*. Every true Christian, every one who loves the Truth and the Author of the Truth, will be deeply touch'd with every Injury which is done to Divine Revelation; and heartily affected with the spreading of Principles and Practices that misrepresent and pervert it. The first Thing, then, intended by *earnestly contending for the Faith*, is a cordial Concern for the Preservation of the Gospel, in the Purity and Simplicity of its Doctrine and Worship; and for the Prevalence

of it, in the Power and Efficacy of its Precept, in the World ; or, in other Words, that it may be rightly understood, and truly obeyed, and successfully propagated amongst Mankind. But, in the next place, that which is most properly and principally intended by this *earnest Contention for the Faith*, is an unmoveable Adherence to true Christianity, in the open Profession of its original Doctrine and Worship, and in the zealous Practice of its pure and holy Precepts. Such a steady Profession and fervent Virtue, such an uncorrupted Integrity and active Piety, in the midst of prevailing Errors and popular Corruption and Degeneracy, exactly answer to the import of the Word used by St. *Jude*. For such Conduct and Example, in such Circumstances, is a great and noble *Conflict*, a brave and strenuous *Contention* and *Dispute* for the Interest and Glory of the Gospel. The Apostle *Paul* has therefore term'd it * *The good FIGHT of Faith*, using the very Word from whence that in my Text is descended : and elsewhere, he calls it a † *great FIGHT* (or wrestling) of *Afflictions* ; where he employs a Metaphor of the same Original with St. *Jude*'s. When this inflexible Attachment to primitive Christianity is maintain'd to the laying down our Lives in its Defence, the same Divine Writer calls it a ‖ *resisting unto Blood, STRIVING*, (or contending) *against Sin*,

* 1 Tim. vi. 12.

† Heb. x. 32.

‖ Heb. xii. 4.

i. e. Apostasy : Where again we meet with the Expression of my Text, and which we there render *striving* : This is the *Contention for the Faith*, of which we have had so many illustrious Examples and a Cloud of Witnesses ; to whose noble and resolute Stand against Error and Corruption, Apostasy and Wickedness, we owe, under God, the Preservation of the Gospel in the World, and the Transmission of it pure and uncorrupt down unto us. Not the Decrees of Councils, not the Thunder of Anathemas, not the Violence of Persecution, not fierce Disputes and contentious Wrangling ; but the faithful and invincible Adherence of Multitudes, in the worst of Times, to the genuine Doctrine and Practice of the Christian Religion, has vindicated it from Calumny and Misrepresentation, kept it pure in the midst of Corruption, and supported the Honour and Influence of it among Men. When then, neither the Recommendation of Fashion and publick Countenance, when neither Numbers nor Power, nor worldly Interest or Applause can tempt us, nor any Terrors or Sufferings affright us, into a Compliance with, or Connivance at any Corruption of the Doctrine, or Disobedience to the Commands of Christ ; when we enter our Protest against all unchristian Principles and Practices, by an opposite Profession and Example ; when, in fine, in the midst of a Crowd of evil Doers, we maintain and labour to promote true and powerful Religion ; then do we, in the right
and

and best Sense, and in the Sense intended by my Text, *earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered unto the Saints.*

There is, indeed, a *Contention for the Faith*, which consists in arguing for it : and, certainly, it is the Duty of every Christian to be so well instructed and grounded in his Religion, as to be ready to give an *Answer to every Man that asketh him a Reason of the Hope that is in him* *. But it is particularly the Office of those who teach the Gospel, to defend it by this Method also to the best of their Ability. But then, as the private Christian is required to defend his Faith with *Meekness and Fear* ; so is it charg'd upon Ministers, that they † *in Meekness instruct those that oppose themselves* : for which Command this charitable Reason is assign'd, *if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.* The Servants of the Lord, therefore, are to use no other Weapons than strong Arguments, nor to strive in any other Way than by forcible Perswasions. They are to keep in view, not only the Confirmation of the sound in their Soundness, but the Recovery also of them which are fallen. Wherefore they are not to back their Arguments with harsh Censures, nor to turn a Defence of Christian Truth into an uncharitable Invective ; unless Truth stands in need of such Support, and Men are to be convinc'd by reviling rather than by reasoning.

* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

† 2 Tim. ii. 25.

In a Word, to put off the Christian Temper, when we contend for the Christian Faith, is to do a great deal of Dishonour and Disservice to it ; to fight against our own Arguments ; and to destroy the Efficacy of the soundest Doctrine by the more prevailing Force of an ill Example.

I shall not press this Matter any further, but proceed to a few practical Reflections upon my Text.

1. In the first Place ; this Scripture is a loud Remonstrance against those lukewarm Christians, who are quite indifferent whether Truth or Error, Righteousness or Wickedness, genuine or corrupt Christianity prevail in the World. Such a Temper as this can never consist with any true Value for Divine Revelation, Concern for their own Souls, or Love of God and of Mankind : and the present State of Christian Religion, in the Place in which we live, renders such an Unconcernedness about its Interest and Support in the World, in any of the Professors of it, peculiarly criminal. For we live in an Age, in which the very Truth and Divine Original of the Gospel is oppos'd with the greatest Freedom and Subtlety, Virulence and Malice : And the Influence of the Writings against Christianity has been such, that it is become in a manner the Fashion to reject it. Infidelity is breaking in upon us, like a Flood, on one Side ; Luxury and Vice, and a Contempt of all Religion, like a mighty Torrent, on the other. Popery, which is a most horrible Corruption of the Gos-

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pel, is secretly undermining and working its Way amongst us. A general Coldness has dampt, and almost quench'd, the Life and Spirit of Piety and Goodness. Is this, then, a Time to immerse ourselves in Worldly-mindedness and Sensuality ? Is this a Time to satisfy ourselves with a formal lifeless Profession of Christianity ? Or, is this a Time to spend our Zeal in Strife and Wrangling one with the other ; and in hot Contention about Matters wherein wise and good Men have differ'd in all Ages ? If we have any Love for our Lord, any Concern for his Honour, any Regard for our Religion, any Fear of the Righteous Judgments of God ; Let us bestir ourselves, and *contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints* : contend for it, first, by striving with all our Might to preserve it, by the most diligent Study of the Doctrines, and most zealous Practice of the Duties of it ; in the next Place, by maintaining an immoveable Profession and exemplary Integrity in the midst of a prevailing Corruption and Degeneracy ; and in the last Place, by adding to a fervent Piety the Exercise of the strongest and most universal Benevolence and Charity.

2. That which, after the most sincere and impartial Search of the Scriptures, appears to us to be the Doctrine of them, ought, while it so appears, to be regarded and valued by us as Divine Truth ; and, as such, contended for in the Methods abovementioned. But then, let us take heed to temper the Warmth of Zeal with the Tender-

Tenderness of Charity. This was the Spirit, with which Christ, with which his Apostles contended for what they were infallibly certain to be the Truth : which Infallibility we cannot pretend to ; and therefore it becomes us not to be so positive we are in the right, as not to be open to future Conviction. And though, while we think ourselves right, we cannot help judging those, who differ from us, in the wrong ; yet the Sense of our Fallibility should teach us to exercise Moderation towards Persons of contrary Sentiments to ours : And whereas it is as much their Duty to follow their Convictions, as it is our Duty to follow ours ; it is plain, that we ought not to be angry with them, or pass severe Censures upon them for so doing.

3. Let us guard against an angry and uncharitable Contention for the Truth. This Text gives Countenance to no such Spirit : The Contention, which it requires, is not a fiery Zeal against the Persons of these immoral and unclean Heretics ; but an earnest Care in the Professors of Christianity to preserve their own *Garments unspotted by the Flesh* ; i. e. to resist stedfastly, and with holy Indignation, every Attempt to seduce them to such wicked Principles and Practices. Indeed, the Care of their own Soundness was to be accompanied with a charitable Endeavour to restore their Brethren who were fallen ; which Endeavour, as the Apostle *Paul* directs, was to be carried on *in the Spirit of Meekness*. But a fiery Zeal against them could never consist with such

Charity : as well may Cruelty agree with Compassion, or Endeavours to destroy Men with a Desire to save them. A fierce and furious Zeal is a strange Absurdity and palpable Contradiction : For such, surely, is a Concern for the Honour of Christ, that shews itself by Ways that offend and dishonour him. That this is his Sense of such a sort of Zeal, is evident from the severe Rebuke it met with from him ; when, in Defence of their Master's Honour, his Disciples expressed so intemperate Heat against the Samaritan Heretics : * *Ye know not (said he) what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives but to save them.* To break the Laws of the Gospel, can never, surely, be the proper Method to defend the Doctrines of it : If then, that Commandment, † *Judge not that ye be not judged,* (which is an awful Prohibition of Censoriousness) be as much a Part of the Mind of Christ, as any Article of Faith ; then, certainly, no Article of Faith is to be secured at the Expence of that Commandment. Orthodoxy of Belief is a most valuable Thing, and what every true Christian most earnestly labours to be possessed of : But a censorious Orthodoxy is an odious and unchristian Thing. For what is a sound Faith joined with an unsound Practice, but the Truth held in Unrighteousness ? *a Faith, which, being without Works, is dead ?* Where a Person professes to have fought,

* Luk. ix. 56.

† Matt. vii. 1.:

with Seriousness and Diligence, the Mind of Christ in the Scriptures, and withal leads a good and virtuous Life; to condemn such a one as having knowingly erred from the Truth, and to pronounce him a vile or ill-designing Man, if he has not the same Notions of the Doctrine of Christianity as I have; is most uncharitable and unjust. It is, moreover, usurping the Authority of God, who alone searcheth the Heart, and therefore alone knows when Errors are criminal Errors; that is, when they proceed from a bad and corrupt Disposition of Mind. Surely then, we take too much upon us, when we presume to separate Men from Christ, and from the Benefit of his Salvation, so far as our Judgment and Sentence can do it, for the meer Errors of their Understanding. Do we know all the Difficulties and Disadvantages they labour under in their Enquiry after Truth? Do we pretend to set Bounds to the Mercy of God? And are we sure that he will not, in his Goodness and Clemency, make Allowance for unavoidable Prejudices? And therefore, to add to our Defence of what we judge to be the Truth, exclusive and damnatory Clauses against those who are not convinced of it; is bold and dangerous, and an Invasion of the Rights and Province of the great Judge of the World.

Let us, then, *contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, by a diligent impartial Search for it in the Scriptures, by a courageous Profession of it to the World, and by a fervent, firm and uncorrupted

rupted Practice of its holy Commandments. By so doing, we shall not only secure, but adorn the Doctrine of Christ which we profess. And as for the Controversies, which are so hotly agitated amongst Christians, let us exercise Charity and Forbearance with each other; disputing for the Gospel, if called to dispute for it, *in Meekness of Wisdom*. By Gentleness and Forbearance, and a wise and moderate Conduct, we shall most effectually recommend our Principles; and be most likely to secure the Confirmation of some, and the Conviction and Recovery of others.

Lastly, Since the Preservation of the original Doctrine of Christianity is of such Importance; since the voluntary Corruption of it is so highly criminal; since it is the great Duty of every Christian to guard against and oppose every such Corruption; let us take heed that we do not, through Rashness or Negligence, or Fondness for Novelty, depart from the pure and primitive Gospel. We should do well to consider, if through Neglect of serious and mature Consideration, if through a Fondness for novel Opinions, or through Conceit of our Abilities and Learning, we fall into Error in any of the more material Points of Christianity; what Degree of Guilt, Error so circumstanced may involve in it; and how far we shall be accountable to the Divine Judgment for being thus accessory to a Corruption of Divine Revelation. Let us, therefore, inculcate upon our
Minds

Minds a weighty Sense of the Value and Importance of all Divine Truth : let us, by earnest Prayer and the most diligent and impartial Enquiry, endeavour to come to the Knowledge of it : let us guard against Prejudice and Precipitancy of Judgment : and finally, let us be ever open to Instruction ; and yet religiously adhere to what appears, on our best Researches, to be the Christian Doctrine ; and always act agreeable to our Convictions.

F I N I S.

I think a new system of the value and im-
 portance of the Christian religion; let us be
 firm and not easily moved; let us be
 pure, endeavoring to come to the knowledge of
 it; let us be diligent in the study of the
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